

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held at Beaumanor Hall on Thursday 9 February 2017 at 2.00 pm

Present

Sonia Singleton	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Nick Goforth	Secondary Academies Headteacher
Suzanne Uprichard	Secondary Academies Governor / PRU
Steve McDonald	Secondary Academies Governor
Bill Nash	Secondary Maintained Governor
Karen Rixon	Primary Academy Headteacher
Stephen Cotton	Primary Academy Headteacher
David Thomas	Primary Academy Governor
Karen Allen	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Martin Turnham	Primary Maintained Headteacher
Michael Wilson	Primary Maintained Governor
Tony Gelsthorpe	Primary Maintained Governor
Chris Davies	Roman Catholic Representative
Jane McKay	Primary Academy Headteacher
Jean Lewis	Primary Academy Governor
Ian Sharpe	Church of England Representative

In attendance

Paul Meredith, Director, Children and Family Services
 Jenny Lawrence, Finance Business Partner, Corporate Resources
 Ivan Ould, Lead Member, Children and Family Services
 Jane Moore, Assistant Director, Education and Early Help

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence/Substitutions</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Dave Hedley, Jo Blackburn, Mark Mitchley, Kath Kelly, Catherine Drury, Heather Sewell and Callum Orr.</p> <p>Martin Turnham attended on behalf of Jo Blackburn.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5 December 2016 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p>	

	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>Schools' Form Self-Assessment</u> Jenny Lawrence explained that this item was included on today's agenda.</p> <p>David Thomas raised a question regarding the transfer to High Needs Block and the impact on school budgets. Jenny responded in terms of school budgets these were at the same level as for 2016/17. It is difficult to quantify the impact of moving the £2.85m to High Needs as no discussions had been undertaken over how this would have been allocated.</p>	
3.	<p>2017/18 Schools' Budget</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced her report and summarised the recommendations in paragraphs 3 - 10, which would require both noting and decision making by Schools' Forum members.</p> <p>Jenny explained that the Schools Block Education Services Grant which the Local Authority receives for statutory duties was now included in the Dedicated Schools Block.</p> <p>High Needs - Jenny reported that the school funding rate would remain at 2016/17 levels. The Minimum Funding Guarantee will remain at minus 1.5% per pupil for 2017/18.</p> <p>Jenny reported that School Budgets had been submitted and had been declared compliant with the regulations by the Education Funding Agency (EFA).</p> <p>The High Needs transfer is slightly below the estimated £3m at £2.58m in the County Council Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which will be considered at Cabinet tomorrow and County Council on 22 February.</p> <p>The table in paragraph 30 sets out High Needs pressures to 2018/19. Proposed savings include Placement costs, review of Specialist Teaching Services and other areas funded from High Needs.</p> <p>Paragraph 34 sets out the proposed Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) savings targets.</p> <p>The National Funding Formula for Early Years has been introduced by the DfE from April 2017. Changes to the ways providers receive funding has been subject to a consultation. An increase of 13.5% for Leicestershire will get passed on to providers. 2017 sees the introduction of the Disability Access Fund, giving additional funding for pupils in receipt of National Living Allowance.</p> <p>SEN Inclusion Fund – support for 3 and 4 year olds set up for SEN providers. An increase of £100,000 to reflect the expansion of 15 to 30 hours provision for eligible families from September 2017.</p> <p>Base Rates set out in paragraphs 59 - 60 in terms of 2, 3 and 4 year</p>	

olds.

No changes to the way school budgets are calculated, other than the re-stating of IDACI bands which are led by national changes in data from the EFA.

New rates set for excluded pupils.

No formal notification of Pupil Premium for 2017/18.

It is estimated £2m as free balance within the Schools Grant, which is being held as contingency. Not clear the Local Authority role in terms of school growth once the National Funding Formula is introduced.

Paragraph 63 sets out high level proposals around Local Authority Budget for growth and savings and focus of Capital Programme over the next 2 years.

The following questions were raised:

High Needs Block

Suzanne Uprichard referred to the table on page 19 which indicates that Oakfield was expected to take a reduction of £30,000 in 2017/18 and £50,000 in 2018/19 and asked if that was correct. Jenny responded that those proposed savings were correct.

Suzanne reported back from a recent meeting at Oakfield which concluded that £30,000 plus other savings identified meant could not logically continue but could probably squeeze up to £20,000. Suzanne reported that Alison Bradley the Headteacher was also a Service Manager at the Local Authority and she was expected to spend time at the LA, that time was not reimbursed back into Oakfield. There needed to be clarification whether Oakfield is a service or a school. Concerns regarding decisions had not been made with Oakfield and concerns that it may result in possible safeguarding issues at Oakfield with their most vulnerable children.

Jenny Lawrence responded that a range of savings and opportunities had been identified by service leads within the Local Authority, within the Medium Term Financial Strategy being presented at County Council on 22 February.

Paul Meredith reported that the decision was made on the basis of information provided by officers and was still going through the process of finalising budget. He stated that Oakfield is a very valuable resource, and confirmed it is a school.

Karen Allen commented that Oakfield has 2 separate funding streams – school to school support which is working very effectively but this is the school budget stream and any cut to their budget would have massive implications.

Jane Moore introduced herself as the newly appointed Assistant Director

for Education and Early Help. Jane confirmed that Oakfield was committed and running as a school and the LA was working with Alison Bradley to ensure the retention of the support and services in place.

Martin Turnham commented on the scale of Oakfield savings from the High Needs Block £30,000 - £50,000, and was a short sighted saving and asked if there could be other ways of making savings.

Steve McDonald referred to the use of High Needs budget in paragraph 31, Appendix B and asked if the Independent sector £24m was included in £66m. Jenny clarified yes the Local Authority was looking at all aspects of High Needs spend and driving down costs of those external placements.

Steve McDonald asked how that compared with Ashmount, Forest Way etc? Jenny responded that unit costs were very different and varied on needs, vast range of support children receiving, some required 2:1 support on a 24-hour basis. Average costs are shown in Appendix B.

Nick Goforth commented that if independent places reduced to £57,800 that would cover the £50,000.

Paul Meredith commented that Leicestershire was in a difficult position, already stating impacts, projected overspend £3.8m reduced to £2.3m but still a long way to go.

David Thomas referred to the table in paragraph 30. The overall allocation to Leicestershire is £63.157m and includes all FE, maintained schools and academy funding. Once the EFA have made the County allocation they recoup funding for FE providers who they fund directly, the difference of £1.694m relates to this funding. The figure of £61.463 represents the grant available to the County Council to commission all High Needs services including places at academies.

Karen Allen thanked colleagues on behalf of the Oakfield Management Board that many people agree it is a school, not a service for those children there. Secondly, looks like may re-consider those cuts to Oakfield, and asked if that was still going to happen, could an equivalent saving to Secondary Partnerships budget also be considered.

Jenny Lawrence clarified school funded £10,000 place plus top up funding similar to special schools. Minimum funding does not kick in the same way and works quite differently.

Early Years Block

Suzanne Uprichard referred to paragraphs 36 and 37, Countesthorpe Nursery, which currently receives £6.80 per hour compared to voluntary and independent providers, and asked does that mean it will come out of being a maintained nursery and the £6.80 per hour will reduce? Jenny responded yes, if the proposals are confirmed.

There was discussion regarding the extension of Free Entitlement to Early Education additional hours, which would be a funding issue for

many schools. Jenny Lawrence stated that Early Years funding reflects on the hours being taken. Jenny proposed that a member of the Early Years and Childcare Service attend a future meeting of the Schools' Forum to clarify how they are working with providers to roll out the 30 hours Free Entitlement to Early Education for 3 and 4 year olds. Forum agreed.

Jane Moore reported that Early Years colleagues had been working with the private sector primarily around the changes. Jane assured Primary Headteachers that the team would make contact to discuss the 30 hours in more detail.

Excluded Pupils

Karen Allen asked where that money would go. Jenny confirmed that funding would follow the pupil, whether it was Oakfield or a different school.

Pupil Premium

Jenny confirmed separate allocation, a question to be asked why it should be separate.

Mr Ould reported that Nick Gibb was representing F40 at a round table discussion, only organisation disagreed with proposals was F40. Promised in March has not been delivered in December. F40 members would be meeting in the House of Commons on 20 February. The Government might have to reconsider how pupil premium be delivered. Proposals on the table at the moment – F40 have rejected the proposals can't understand the logistics.

Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve

Tony Gelsthorpe referred to the table in paragraph 61 on School Deficits and Sponsorship. Jenny Lawrence responded there were two different groups of schools converting. Under normal conversion would carry forward deficit and all surplus, but if converting under sponsorship arrangements then school would leave deficit behind with the Local Authority and start afresh. Jenny said where at risk of school deficit coming back to the Authority, the Local Authority will issue a Warning Notice and would expect the school to see their way out of that deficit in time as a maintained school. Jenny clarified the table in paragraph 61 leaves a balance of just over £2m.

The Local Authority Budget

Tony Gelsthorpe referred to paragraph 63 and asked what proportion of the LEEP budget? Jenny clarified that was the total budget.

DECISIONS

Schools' Forum were asked to approve the retention of budgets. Jenny clarified the third bullet point increase 2016/17 – previously Education Services Grant was now included in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Schools' Forum agreed the recommendations in the report, as set out on page 10.

4.	<p>2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant and Schools National Funding Formula</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence introduced her report, based on an early analysis what proposals mean and what the National Funding Formula may be if implemented.</p> <p>Jenny reported that Cabinet would be considering proposals at its meeting tomorrow.</p> <p>Two consultations: Local Authority and School Funding 2018/19 High Needs funding</p> <p>The Department for Education will calculate the pupil level elements of DSG and there would be an addition of non-school factors funded at historic cost. 2018/19 the Local Authority will be responsible for setting formula for schools.</p> <p>A 'hard' formula will be implemented in April 2019, the DfE will calculate, local authorities will be removed from decisions on the school funding system.</p> <p>Tony Gelsthorpe asked if that meant School Funding Forum will effectively disappear. Jenny responded there are still some elements of the consultation which suggests discretion of LAs, but would have to consider the role of the Schools' Forum. Paul Meredith commented it could be a different format bringing schools together.</p> <p>Jenny said it was important to note the figures you see are not what budgets will be in 2018/19, they illustrate what 2016/17 budgets would be if the new formula was introduced. Pupil data will change underneath that.</p> <p>Jean Lewis commented that deprivation on area cannot reflect pupils outside catchment coming into school; money doesn't follow them. Jenny reported that IDACI is based on the home address of pupils not the school they attend.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding Sparsity indicator. Based on distance children have to travel to nearest school, does not reflect transport. Leicestershire is expected to receive £306k but there is an £11m reduction in the Lump Sum. Almost impossible to predict.</p> <p>Concern that it may not be possible to fund schools as value in National Funding Formula, if there were increases in the cost of the school factors and pupil growth.</p> <p>Jenny clarified that the National Funding Formula treats academies and maintained schools exactly the same.</p> <p>Jean Lewis referred to special schools that run 4-19 right through and asked does the basic amount given to our schools alter or are they still on flat rate? Jenny responded the National Funding Formula does not</p>	
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	<p>affect special schools at all.</p> <p>Karen Rixon commented on high amount allocated towards prior attainment, primary schools by definition, don't get prior attainment. In infant schools that is a third of the children, quite discriminatory and perhaps needs to be clarified. Jenny responded that the LA will be responding to the consultation to say do not agree with the weightings.</p> <p>Nick Goforth commented seems quite a large gap, which questions whether gaps need to be so large.</p> <p>Could be up to £6m loss of High Needs funding, huge concern as a Local Authority.</p> <p>Schools special needs units where per pupil funding will revert back to mainstream funding top up Element funding £6,000 not £10,000, just a technical change.</p> <p>The Local Authority is working through and will be submitting a response to the consultation, which Jenny agreed to share with Schools' Forum members. Jenny advised that Schools' Forum may wish to consider whether they wanted to submit their own response to the consultation which ends on 22 March. Schools' Forum members agreed as there would be a difference of views on particular issues, colleagues to respond on behalf of their school. It was also agreed Schools' Forum Members to urge headteacher groups to respond to the consultation accordingly.</p> <p>Steve McDonald asked if Leicestershire would benefit from extra funding? Jenny responded if the formula was fully implemented, yes.</p> <p>Jenny agreed to convene an informal workshop for all Forum members before the end of the consultation period to tease out any issues in the run up to 2018/19 National Funding Formula proposals.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Schools' Form Self-Assessment</p> <p>Jenny Lawrence referred to the DfE guidance self-assessment toolkit issued for local authorities, which sets out responsibilities and good practice guides looking at the way Schools' Forum works. Jenny asked for any comments or suggestions to be sent to her by the beginning of March.</p> <p>Ian Shape asked for clarification regarding academy schools – 'soft' and 'hard' formula – pro rata or just carry on as now. Jenny responded, as we understand it will impact for maintained from April and academies from September.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Monday 12 June 2017</p>	

	Monday 25 September 2017 Monday 4 December 2017 All dates from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at Beaumanor Hall	
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